of External Affairs, while addressing a business delegation from Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry and representatives of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry on July 7, 2003, *inter-alia* reiterated India's commitment to the concept of a South Asian Union.

(b) Pakistan has so far not reacted positively to India's declared readiness to enter into discussions to work towards a South Asian Union.

(c) South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) member countries are exchanging tariff concessions under SAARC Preferential Trading Arranagement (SAPTA). A Committee of Experts has been constituted to draft a Comprehensive Treaty Regime for establishing a Free Trade Area in the South Asian region.

Potential of Indian Manufacturing Sector

†2727. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Indo-American Chamber of Commerce (IACC) had suggested a six point programme to Government to increase competitive potential and global operation of the Indian Manufacturing Sector;

(b) whether according to the IACC, Indian companies can establish their manufacturing facilities in different parts of the world in marketing conditions; and

(c) if so, Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI CHENNAMANENI VIDYASAGAR RAO): (a) to (c) The IACC has conducted an in-house study in this regard which had not been submitted to the Government.

Rate contract for purchase of computer systems

2728. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether competent authority issued an office memorandum during December, 1998 on purchase of computer systems by Government Departments;

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.